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DE RUEHBJ #1987/01 2901001
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 171001Z OCT 06
FM AMEMBASSY BEIJING
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0003
INFO RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 021987

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL PHUM CH KN

SUBJECT: OCTOBER 17 MFA PRESS BRIEFING: UNSCR 1718;
CHINA-DPRK BORDER CONTROLS; SECRETARY RICE VISIT; NEPAL
BORDER SHOOTING

¶1. Key Points made at the October 17 Press Briefing were:

-- China will implement UNSCR 1718 seriously and in a responsible manner.

-- Regarding reports that China is controlling truck traffic from China to North Korea and that banks in Dandong are restricting transfers of money into North Korea, China is obliged and will follow strictly the measures described in UNSCR 1718.

-- Begun in 1990, China's boundary defense plan includes setting up wire netting and creating patrol roads in border areas, including along China's border with North Korea but this not related to the DPRK's recent nuclear test.

-- China noticed the DPRK's statement calling UNSCR 1718 "an act of war" but the important thing is for all parties to refrain from escalating tension.

-- China firmly opposes any North Korean nuclear test, is committed to denuclearization and opposes nuclear proliferation. UNSCR 1718 sent an important message to North Korea and requires the DPRK to take a responsible attitude.

-- China has always provided humanitarian assistance to North Korea and will continue to do so.

-- Japan, as an NPT signatory, must stick to the three "no nuclear principles."

-- Secretary Rice will visit China October 20-21.

-- France's President Chirac will visit China October 25-28.

-- All relevant information has already been released about television footage showing Chinese border patrol officials shooting apparently unarmed Tibetans crossing from China into Nepal.

DPRK Nuclear Test and UNSCR 1718

¶2. At the October 17 regularly scheduled MFA Press Briefing, Spokesperson Liu Jianchao said China will implement UNSC Resolution 1718 seriously and in a responsible manner, but would not comment on news reports that China was imposing additional controls on trucks crossing into North Korea from China or that banks in Dandong were not allowing Chinese to send money to the DPRK. When pressed on the issue of possible Chinese financial sanctions, Liu said UNSCR 1718 has a clear description of measures to be taken towards North Korea, China and all nations are obliged to follow 1718, and any other questions regarding financial matters should be referred to Chinese commercial authorities.

¶3. Responding to a question about China building a wall

along its border with North Korea, Liu said that since 1990, China has gradually implemented a boundary defense plan that includes setting up wire netting and creating patrol roads in border areas. Emphasizing that any current activity along China's border with North Korea is not related to the DPRK's recent nuclear test, Liu stated the purpose of putting up netting is to improve border control and maintain order in border areas and that the current situation along the China-DPRK border is normal.

¶4. Liu said China noticed the DPRK's statement calling UNSCR 1718 "an act of war" but the important thing is for all parties to refrain from escalating tension, to make efforts to resume the Six-Party Talks and to resolve issues through dialogue and consultation in order to maintain peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula.

¶5. When asked to comment on rumors of another DPRK nuclear test, Liu responded that China firmly opposes any North Korean nuclear test, is committed to denuclearization and opposes nuclear proliferation. UNSCR 1718 sent an important message to North Korea and requires the DPRK to take a responsible attitude, said Liu. UNSCR 1718 is the common expression of the will of the international community, said Liu, and all parties should exercise restraint.

¶6. Responding to a question about China's Ambassador to the UN Wang Guangya's statement that Beijing would not stop or board DPRK ships, Liu said UNSCR 1718 shows UN consensus and sends a strong message to the DPRK that its actions were unacceptable. To improve the current situation, all parties must act to relax tensions, said Liu. Actions that could further worsen the situation will not help the common interest of resolving the issue peacefully, he said.

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¶7. China is acting on the assumption that the DPRK did, in fact, conduct a nuclear test on October 9, and as more information is made available it appears clear that such a test did occur, said Liu.

CHINA'S FOOD AID TO DPRK AND HEALTH MINISTER VISIT

¶8. In response to a comment that the World Food Program reported China reduced its food aid to the DPRK by two-thirds in recent months, Liu said he was not sure where the reporter got his statistics as China has always provided humanitarian assistance to North Korea and will continue to do so as it is the correct thing to do.

¶9. Liu had no information about a purported visit by the Chinese Minister of Health to Pyongyang or about any other Chinese official contact with the DPRK.

JAPAN'S NUCLEAR OPTION

¶10. China's reaction to recent comments by Japanese officials that Japan should examine its own nuclear options is that Japan, as an NPT signatory, must stick to the three "no nuclear principles," said Liu.

SECRETARY RICE TO VISIT OCTOBER 20-21

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¶11. Liu confirmed that U.S. Secretary of State Rice will visit China October 20-21 at the invitation of Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing. She will meet with FM Li and other Chinese officials.

FRENCH PRESIDENT CHIRAC TO VISIT OCTOBER 25-28

¶12. France's President Chirac will visit China October 25-28 at the invitation of President Hu Jintao, said Liu, noting that as both China and France are members of the UNSC the issue of North Korea will likely be discussed.

CHINA-NEPAL BORDER SHOOTING

¶13. Liu said he had no new information or comments about television footage showing Chinese border patrol officials shooting apparently unarmed Tibetans crossing from China into Nepal, stating that all relevant information is already released.

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